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Miss Robertson?
of Blackheath.

Published in the Art gallery, Dec. 1 1801, by E. Blandish, Paternoster Row.

THE
LIFE AND MEMOIRS
OF
MISS ROBERTSON,
OF
Blackheath.

FAITHFULLY RECORDED BY HER TO THE BEST OF HER
KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF,

WITH HER PORTRAIT BY HOPWOOD.

EXITUS ACTA PROBAT.

" In Macedon, when Alexander reign'd,
And vict'ry after vict'ry was gain'd,
The Greek gazettes (for they had papers there),
Published a thousand fibs, as they do here."

London:

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1802.

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Any bookseller selling them without the signature will be prosecuted for pirating the work. This precaution is taken to prevent a spurious edition; and twelve copies or their value, will be given to the informer.

ADVERTISEMENT.

MISS ROBERTSON having been repeatedly asked for the following Narrative, submits it to the Public: accuracy of style she hopes may be dispensed with. Illness and affliction are bad companions for study. The circumstances in many respects are very painful; they are facts; she relates them as such, with no ill-will towards any of the parties whose conduct is related. If they are here exposed, she has been a sufferer by them. They have distressed, vilified, and injured her, even while they partook of her bounty. Her greatest enemies have been those to whom she has looked for protection, and those who had gained her confidence to betray it, and put the emoluments in their pocket. The parties are (if not all of them living), many of them not far distant; they cannot deny the facts while testimony is against them, and if they say any thing I have here advanced is only a suspicion, or surmise, let them prove it to be so, by satisfactory evidence to the contrary.

And any person to whose mind some circumstances may be recalled by this, will find Miss Robertson highly sensible of the favor of their communications. Many may now be living who are lovers of justice, and would be glad to see her enjoy what is her right.

ERRATA.

- Page 11. l. 3. for "*of* the house," read "*in* the house."
35. l. 8. read " of no consequence."
37. l. 4. *dele* " me."
45. l. 7. from bottom; *dele* " deep."
50. l. 3. for " he," read " we."
58. l. 7. from bottom, for " Hill," read " Hardy."
68. l. 6. for " removed," read " recovered."
78. l. 9. read " to apply."
-
-

MEMOIRS
OF
MISS ROBERTSON.

“ I will unfold a tale, though *STRANGE* yet *TRUE*;
The application must be made by you.”

THAT I had a father cannot be disputed; but from *his* testimony I cannot inform the reader of what kindred or country he is. He never introduced me to any relative of his; nor did I ever hear my mother, or any of her children, speak of my father's family*, or hear him converse of the man.

* The reader will think this strange; for if he had been left an orphan early, or even dropped at somebody's door, or educated in a fondling hospital, it is most probable, at some period or other, some of the circumstances would have been named; as no one is censurable for the manner in which they are introduced, but for their conduct in life. But—

“ Thereby hangs a tale.”

ner in which he was educated and brought up. In the year 1767 or 1768 he was in London, by trade an oilman, resident in Horslydown: he served no apprenticeship that I ever heard of; nor do I believe my mother ever knew who he was, or where he came from. He married Eliza Earle, whose father was a woollen-draper, a man of considerable property. I have no reason to believe it could be a match of affection, as no one could be more regardless of her husband's interest, and the welfare of his children.

When a man is encumbered with a wife who is seldom (if ever) fit to be seen, and those who have business with the husband (in his absence) can see no rational person, whose interest in his concerns will lead her to substitute herself for the moment of enquiry, I fear he will find hirelings pay little regard; and that his customers, after a few such disappointments, will go elsewhere.

This was my father's case; he had a wife,---no man's house is furnished *without*; but I believe he had not a more useless piece of furniture in it. Independent of her neglect of *his* business, she neglected *her own*; her house, her children, were quite *en suite*.

quite. And though she had as many fingers as most people, and had been taught the use of them in a tolerable education, I am sure, (since I can recollect) they were never injured by industry. Her conduct (as is always the case) led to continual jarrings ; and if Mr. Earle * had not been an old man, not likely to live long, I think *they* would not have lived long together. However, they have many years anticipated his death, as it only took place in 1801.

This woman, who claims the honour of bringing me into the world, has ever been my most inveterate and cruel enemy, I believe on account of the little resemblance I bear to her. But as I have, from mistaken compassion, of late years, largely contributed to her support, I vainly hoped I was entitled, if not to some gratitude, at least to silence. Nor

* Her father. Since I can recollect any thing, this old man always appeared exactly the same ; he was very penurious, and a most excentric character. He resided some time at Lee and Lewisham in Kent, and some years ago built a vault for himself at Lee. After being many years a widower, he married, 1775, his servant, a girl from Gloucester, who did him the honour of fathering a daughter upon him. My mother is his only issue by his first wife: she married without her father's consent, and there was never any cordiality between my father and the old man.

could I suppose she would be one edged tool sharpened against my life and interest.

I am their eldest surviving child ; I received very little education at their expence (one year only) with Mrs. L'heureux*. At the time of my birth, 1771†, my father was in a good way of business, and likely to provide handsomely for his family ; but making soap without paying duty, he had all his effects seized for the penalties. He retired with his family to a small farm, near Sawbridgeworth, and afterwards, about 1776, he again settled in a soap manufactory at Stratford. There, through the influence of my grandfather Earle, he gained considerable credit, and was, for some years, successful ; he had a very pretty farm contiguous to his manufactory ; there he built stables and offices, and kept a chaise, which was exchanged for the fashion annually ; and tho' surrounded by the excise, *he never entered one.*

* Besides some occasional attendance at a day school.

† When only two years old, this imprudent and regardless mother put me into a stage coach to send me to a godmother's, thirty miles distant, who was very kind to me. I believe the coachman forgot the direction ; for I was lost on this excursion, but found in the hands of a lady who proved extremely kind to me afterwards.

IN

In the year 1787 I had received what education they thought proper to give me; and any place being better than home with such a mother, I at Midsummer engaged myself as teacher to a lady at Richmond, who was well established and respected. In a few months, she offered to take me in as a partner, and wished my father to advance 40*l.* in consideration of a younger sister receiving her education in the house: if he had kept the money and her away, I might have been very comfortable; but little could be expected from children brought up under such an idle and dissolute mother; therefore my sister, instead of being the pupil, assumed the mistress, which caused continual dissensions between my partner and self. In consequence of this, at Christmas, 1788, my father took a house in Sloane-street, Chelsea, where he thought all his children might be educated *by me*, and yet all be mistresses! Though this plan was so absurd, in a few weeks I had nineteen of the most respectable children in the neighbourhood.

At Midsummer following, my father had all his effects seized by the excise again. Just before this happened, the linen-draper, who had furnished the house with linen, returned me a bill of 50*l.* of my

persuaded me to sign a security to a Merchant* for a considerable debt of his, as I had a prospect of succeeding in my feminary, and the expectation of a fortune from my grandfather.

I think those who have the feelings of parents must be impressed with a just detestation at such a recital; a man to involve his children in his imprudencies, and thus, as it were, chain a clog to them to drag through life, provided he could possess a temporary accommodation!! I hope such unnatural cases do not often occur; I have had reason to lament it did in this instance.

Turned by this unfeeling man out of the comfortable establishment I had in possession, at the early age† of eighteen, few young people might have had sufficient fortitude to struggle in the paths of virtue.

After (without soliciting my father's concurrence) I had settled the debt for which I had been sued, my object was to seek an asylum. Mr. and Mrs. Watson,

* Mr. Larkin, of St. John's-street, Smithfield.] His attorneys Messrs. Lyons, Gray's Inn.

† November, 1789,

of Westminster*, whose daughter had been under my care, kindly offered me every accommodation till a suitable situation appeared. While under their roof a gentleman †, who had two little children placed with me at Chelsea, and who had five more! had the insolence and cruelty to offer me 200*l.* a year, and a neat furnished house, in order, as he said, to be rid at times of a troublesome wife, whom this wretch had married for her money! Shocked and disgusted, I waited upon the lady's father, with his letters, thinking it right he should know the situation his daughter and her children were in, and that he might be guarded against leaving much of their property in the power of one who would convert it to such base purposes.

This family soon after recommended me to the Hon. Mrs. Cunningham, of Donaghadee, to educate her daughters, and I accompanied her to Scotland.

* I hope any of the families here mentioned will not suppose I mean any disrespect in mentioning them: I have long been silent. no person ever suffered so much from unfounded calumny, and to prove the facts, names are requisite. The parties cannot deny or confute what I have stated. Those who have acted most vilely themselves are the people who have traduced me. Here let them view themselves.

† J. Flowerdew, Esq.

OF

Of this opportunity I was very glad, being always fearful of Larkin's bond. Mrs. Cunningham was made acquainted with some of my Father's transactions; and on asking where he came from, what family he was of, &c. and I not being able to inform her, she became more inquisitive. It was remarkable that the families who visited her and saw me, frequently asked her if I was a relation from the north; the likeness was most striking, and the voice and manner very similar. I soon learnt from Mrs. Cunningham that her name had been Robertson; she hinted she had suspicions that I might be the issue of some of her dispersed family*. This induced Mrs. Cunningham to endeavour to learn some particulars of my father; but I never could get him into conversation on the subject of his origin. Esteemed

* They took up arms against George I. 1716, and opposed his succession, but by whom our religious privileges were handed down to us, as we now enjoy them. They again took up arms in favour of the young pretender in 1745 and 6. The rebels were defeated, and their property confiscated. Since an act has passed for the restoration of their property, with some exceptions. But I fear, though their claims are just, their hands are stained, and some circumstances prevent their seeking justice in one instance, lest they meet it in another.—
Their heirs do not inherit their guilt.

and

and caressed by Mrs. Cunningham and honored with the evident attention of her son, I thought now my happiness was secure, but Mr. R. Cunningham asking his father's permission to pay his addresses to me, he positively refused. Robert used every argument; told his father his pay (being in the army) would keep a wife, he did not want riches, he wanted a companion; if he only wished for a statue to ornament his house, he could buy one for a trifle at Coades's, that could do no mischief. We tried every means, but could not accomplish the end; and I left the family in about five months*.

I then engaged myself in a very respectable seminary at Tottenham Cross, but Roberts horse by instinct often trotted to the nunnery gate: a kind housemaid would take a letter through the chinks, and, forgive me reader, if I once or twice sent one in reply: but unfortunately coming one Sunday in October, just as the little misses in their clean white frocks were going to church, the old duenna, mother to the

* A journal, and many interesting occurrences, written at the time, were left in my secretary, and fell into the hands of Oakley and his men, or Creasy. There were, likewise, many family anecdotes, and a Tour through Scotland, which, if ever restored, shall be added in a future edition.

I here wish to acknowledge the kind instruction I received from the learned Dr. Wm. Robertson, of Edinburgh.

lady

lady abbess was much displeased : we differed in consequence of it ; for it is hard to reconcile the sentiments of nineteen to the prejudices of eighty. I saw nothing so tremendous in a virtuous attachment, founded on esteem for each other's mental endowments, as she was pointing out ; and I said I would leave her at Christmas.

But my greatest trial was to come in the interim. Robert was married, on the 27th of November, to a Miss Kenyon from Ireland, his father positively threatening to disinherit him in case of refusal. This affliction was in some measure softened by a letter from his mother, expressed in the most tender terms, promising me her protection and assistance ; but alas ! I could not go there to seek it : it was the only scene I wished to avoid*.

At Christmas, as I intended, I left Tottenham, and sent my baggage the day before by the errand cart, addressed to be left till called for : one of my worthy relations, who knew it was coming, went and asked for it in the right name, and it was delivered ; but I never saw or heard any more of it ! It contained my clothes, and various other articles, and some

* About this time I received some emolument from sundry tracts, Dialogues, a Child's Grammar, and Sermons for Children, which I published.

money.

money. I now appeared quite destitute and friendless; but notwithstanding the natural delicacy of my constitution, I did not

“ Shiver and shrink at sight of toil and danger,” but endeavoured to exert myself, that I might procure more. In the course of a week I engaged myself to go into a family in Cheshire, and set out on my journey. The fatigue of it, with all that I had previously undergone, brought on a violent fever and delirium, I reached the end of my journey before any alarming symptoms came on; there I was confined six weeks in a strange house, and not a creature I knew; but providence so ordered it, that I had every attention, advice, and assistance. I continued in this worthy family five years, and left it on account of my health, it being too cold an air; but did not leave it without regret, and had, till the present unfortunate affair, some kind friends there*.

* Last April, the lady enclosed me some of the horrid accounts published in the News-papers, of my going about in men’s cloaths, &c. &c! Is it not wonderful that there is such a propensity in human nature to believe an ill report? That FIVE YEARS residence with the party, (during which, and every period of my life, my conduct and deportment have been most scrupulously delicate, nor did I ever use an unchaste expression) should be superseded by a News-paper paragraph, is surprising!

I left

I left it at Christmas 1794, and in February 1795, I went to reside with Miss Sharpe at Crooms Hill, Blackheath. We soon became attached to each other*.

In August following Mr. Cunningham died, and in December his son's wife. This circumstance revived former hopes; the family came to town, and I visited them; but our intimacy was more renewed by one of the young ladies being taken very ill, and having a very great desire to see me. I considered Mrs. Cunningham as a mother, and had the most affectionate respect for her. She always addressed me as her dear child, and now assured me of her redoubled assiduities, not only to promote my happiness, but my interest.

She procured, at a great expence, attested copies of all her family papers, traced individuals abroad, and retraced them to England; had advertisements inserted, and rewards offered for information on the subject; and, I believe, was well satisfied I had a prior claim on great part of her fortune, I being an elder brother's daughter.

* By Miss Sharpe I was introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Creasy as her intimate friends.

Three years were spent in making these enquiries. I declined Mr. Cunningham's offer for a time, fearing our affinity might be excluded from the marriage laws; and I could not gain any information from my father*; nor did I wish him to know any of my concerns.

During this interval, I was very happy with Miss Sharpe†, with whom I had engaged as partner; but our tranquility was often disturbed by the impertinent interference of an old woman, who had boarded with Miss Sharpe: she was of a very sordid mean disposition, and I believe, like a child, was jealous that Miss Sharpe paid the most attention to me. She was frequently complaining to our servants of us, and to us of them. She likewise meddled in the school; but I did not think it was malice; I

* Now, if he finds it convenient, he can leave London, as he has plenty of property, but I hope he will first pay Larkin's bond.

† Any rational stranger will be surprised to hear that I resided at Blackheath in that degree of respectability ever since February 1795. Whereas in 1801, the inhabitants made a hue and cry, that I was a swindler, some said a woman in men's clothes, others, a man in woman's clothes! Yet, the physician and two surgeons of the place attended me those years in various circumstances, visited us with their families, and entrusted us with their children!!

only

only attributed it to an officious disposition. I fear I was mistaken. Mrs. Neale was formerly a milliner in Watling Street; she came from Alnwick, and appeared to have had very few advantages of education, and a little mind: her parsimonious disposition induced her to continue * with us as long as we lived at Crooms Hill, and she was much displeased that we would not take her to the Heath.

In October 1799, I had the misfortune to lose my revered mother (for such she was to me,) who had remarried, a short time before her decease, to Mr. Hill of Lungergreen. Her children† remitted me 100 l. for family mourning.

As Mrs. Neale had been some years with us, and been known before by Miss Sharpe, I made her a present of a garter ring, more as a compliment to Miss Sharpe than her, as I was willing to show, that

* See the terms, her evidence, &c. in "Who are the Swindlers?" and had she not, with the most malicious inveteracy, vilified, and done all that she could to incense the public against me, I never should have stated any of these facts, but have silently passed them over, as the oddities of age, and the want of sense.

† Colonel Cunningham and the Lady of Sir W. H. Pagett, of Summer Hill, who informed me Mrs. Hill had farther considered me.

while

while under my roof, I considered her as one of my family. I made no representation of my property or disclosure of my effects to Mrs. Neale on this occasion, nor did I grant any licence for her tongue to relate, or her head to conceive any.

My disposition was naturally very reserved, particularly towards those I was by no means partial to. I am sure Mrs. Neale never recommended herself as a candidate for my confidence, nor did I ever repose any in her.

She afterwards appeared in court* with this identical ring, to prove me a swindler! though I had paid the maker, and she had given nothing for it.

In April following, the colonel waited on me, with his solicitor, and (what he said was) a copy of Mrs. Hill's will, as far as it related to me, which seemed highly gratifying.—With some other property which was then paid to me, it settled on me the estate of Faskally, which had been a part of her marriage settlement, but disposed of by her to a relation for the life of the survivor (I suppose, for a valuable consideration) as Mrs. Hill never resided on it.—Fishery was farmed, and the house uninhabited, and out of repair at her decease; the gentleman who

* July 1801, as an evidence for Creasy in his defence v. Haycraft.

occupied it having died two years before. This estate * was now by her will mine, in case I married her son, but was independent of him or any future engagement I might enter into, in case I fulfilled my promise to him.

Mr. Robertson of Dalkeith was to see me invested with the sole right to it, and to use his endeavours for the recovery of considerable unclaimed property. The colonel expressed his wish, that it might not be named how the property became mine, as he did not wish to gratify the relations of his first wife, who had some jealousies about the property of his two infant daughters. I did not mention the circumstances to Miss Sharpe, and she was not present at this interview, being engaged in ordering sandwiches, &c.—Is it probable I should acquaint my tradesmen? Or was it necessary I should make a public proclamation of it by herald Neale, spinster?

* Faskally is near Blair, in Perthshire; it lies in a beautiful vale, beyond the Pass of Killiecrankie is watered by the Tummel. I believe it has been sold under a power of factory without my consent, and Mr. Robertson is liable to the penalty of his bond.—But Martyr and Co. prevent my acting, and seeking redress, by keeping me in confinement; they say they have clubbed together to keep me for life.

I fear

I fear a degree of deafness she has, made her mistake the circumstances, or that her volubility induced her to relate it differently, or that her memory had lost its elasticity at the time. The *feedy** flowers of her rhetoric in this case, produced a motley crop. She had better have washed it down with the waters of Lethe, as she did a bonnet, and some other articles she had bought of me, for fear I should recollect they were not paid for.

In May, Mr. Robertson of Dalkeith came to Crooms Hill, and in the most friendly terms assured me, he would willingly accept the trust committed to him by his sister, as soon as he was in possession of all the circumstances her will alluded to; but he found some months would be requisite to settle her concerns.—After making me some presents, he left town in a few days.

Our house at Crooms Hill being very old, and the roof very indifferent, &c. and a very short period of our lease being unexpired, we thought it advisable to be enquiring for another. I urged

* Mrs. Neale always says *I feed*, for I saw; but she has used her *saw* to me, even the keen cruel edge of her uneven tongue.

this, as I wished by all means Miss Sharpe should have a very genteel and comfortable establishment. After looking at several, she fixed on one in the Paragon, for which we agreed with Mr. Searles, surveyor, who had been concerned in building it. The one we agreed for, was about falling into the hands of Mr. Cator, the land owner, in consequence of a mortgage. We had his agreement signed to make our title clear, in case we chose to purchase it within three years, or else we were to have a lease of twenty-eight years*.

Not a creature had at this time heard me mention any estates. Monk † the painter was so desirous of having all the house to finish, that I believe he gave another something for *a share*; to whom I had promised half the work.

Monk had been employed by us for jobs and repairs during our residence at Crooms Hill. He

* Mr. Searles was so sanguine in the business, that he set the men to work several days before the agreement was executed.—No further representation of property was made to him, than that I meant to expend 400 £. on it, and he promised it should be ready in July 1800.

† His action against me is for 567 £. 15s. 11d. exclusive of 130 £. I gave him on account. He never delivered a bill, though I applied for it at Christmas, as I did for all the bills.

knew

knew where we came from, as he had put our names on the door. Jones * had been foreman to the brick-layer we at first employed; he solicited our business while at Crooms Hill. Monk begged of me to employ Martyr in preference to another I had partly engaged. I told Martyr † I intended to expend 400*l.* on the house.

This house was taken in the joint names of Miss Sharpe and myself, and no one knew but what we intended carrying on the school jointly, as we con-

* His action is for 821 *l.* 12*s.* 8½*d.* exclusive of 100 *l.* I gave him on account. I have not had any bill from him.

† He arrested me for 1193*l.* 15*s.* 3*d.* but I know not what for; these men have sued me at the joint expense of all my creditors; they call it a club, to keep themselves and me out of the property; this is the wisdom of Martyr the carpenter, who is *Chief Consul* in this business. He has a son, an attorney, who has made a bill of 123 *l.* in the names of my joint creditors: to this bill is added a postscript of 44 *l.* 15*s.* of further expences in procuring me to be arrested, signed in form, Everest and Martyr.

There are writs for counties and cities by wholesale, tho' Sharpe told them the very house where to find me, and one writ would have done; but these put so many more fees in the lawyer's pocket; and as he was a son, it was very natural, although some of the creditors look very cross about it. They begin to think a prison pays no debts; and while Martyr has drawn them in to pay for his revenge, I can do nothing for them.

this offer, but paid the bills as they became due. Just before we left Crooms Hill I had bought a coach that had been the Earl of Exeter's; I had it a month on trial; I paid the price for it that was demanded*. Mr. Creasy and his wife extolled the ease and elegance of this coach; and I believe it was their subject to every body they saw. As I was there about a month† they had many rides in it, and Mr. Creasy, whom you will allow to be a judge, said there was not such another in Greenwich. While I was at Creasy's, I made them several presents, and Mrs. Creasy solicited the use of my servants, she being a part of the time without (except a girl who had the care of her child). In the Month of August I lost a letter‡ I had received from Scotland, which I had laid on the table in order to answer it, &c. I made great enquiries after it, and could not perceive for what pur-

* This, Creasy, in gratitude for the accomodation it afforded him and his family, brought forward in his defence to prove me a swindler, and to substantiate it he produced a footman (who I believe never saw the coach till it was repainted) to swear I used a coach with a coronet to deceive the public!

† Except a few days I spent at Mr. Parker's at Enfield.

‡ I believe this letter laid the foundation of all the anonymous ones.

pose

pose it was purloined, but I never had any account of it; and Mrs. Creasy told me she had found her girl very curious, and we feared she might have taken it: they all seemed concerned that it was lost; I was particularly so, and could not be redressed. In August I received Mr. Robertson's instruction to send him a power of factory that he might receive and remit me some rents due at Whitfuntide. I had been recommended by Mr. Clark of Fleet Street, to Mr. Dobie; I accordingly applied to him to execute this factory; and Mr. Robertson further directed a bond to be prepared, that he should execute the trust committed to him under the penalty of 5000*l*.^{*} Being at Creasy's when I received these deeds from Mr. Dobie, (who had drawn them up from the instructions in the letter) I asked Creasy to witness my signing the factory, which to the best of my recollection either Mr. Dobie told me, or Mr. Robertson's letters

^{*} If any person was deceived it was myself; both Oakley and Creasy well knew I had a great deal of property at Crooms Hill. Creasy's family visited us and saw it; Oakley removed our goods to the Heath, part of which he knew he had furnished me with, and had been paid for. If I had been the character they have dared to represent, let the reader pause awhile to consider whether my object would not have been gain. What have I gained?

expressed was to be signed at the bottom of every page, by which means Creasy saw some of the contents. To the best of my recollection he never saw the bond: I never authorised Creasy to represent this to any person. Creasy told me it would oblige him if I would employ Mr. Haycraft* as my ironmonger; but this was months before he knew any thing of these deeds. I sent the factory by the post; and as soon as could be expected after, Mr. Robertson came to town; he called at Creasy's, but I was out; he then wrote to me by the post to meet him in London, to receive the money, &c. which he paid me at the house of a tradesman in St. Paul's, and before I left him he executed his bond. The colonel and I now made up our minds that we would wait no longer for the house, as I had no hope of it being ready to receive us for some months. I was partial to the Heath, it being a sweet situation, I thought I should like to reside there occasionally, especially as Oakley's decorations far exceeded my expectations; and I began to fear the colonel would think it too expensive for Miss Sharpe, unless it would save a town residence for us. He said he should not like it with-

* Mr. Haycraft having recommended Creasy in a way of trade.

out stables*, &c. and he wished me to have Mr. Holland to superintend the job; he told me to apply again for the estimates, but none could I get. The surveyor said the stables would be 600*l.* in the manner I described. I went soon after to Brighton, and was looking out for a large good house for our residence there till the Paragon was finished, and in the mean time took one in North Street for Miss Sharpe and myself till we were suited with one I thought the colonel would like: a day or two after I went to Brighton; I received an anonymous letter that made me very uneasy; I wrote to the colonel in consequence of it, and requested him to clear up some circumstances named in it. This he appeared to do in an immediate answer, and requested me to let him have the perusal of the papers† I was in possession of, as they would be of great use to his conveyancer, who was preparing the settlements. I had not taken these papers to Brighton; I immediately went to London

* My carriage stood at livery stables, from whence I hired horses.

† They consisted of some copies of wills, Mr. Robertson's bond, a grant of annuity secured on a freehold in Salop, some certificates, registers, &c. &c. many of which had been collected and given to me by Mrs. Hill. No tradesmen I employed ever saw these papers. Mr. Searles once came into a room where I was looking them over, and said jocosely, "you are well employed;" no observation was made of the contents.

to

to give them to him as he requested: they were locked up in my secretary at the Heath. The Rev. Mr. Waugh accompanied me to the Heath and afterwards to London. I slept that night at Mr. Creasy's, and the next day returned to Brighton, where I had left Miss Sharpe; I took two of Creasy's* children with me for sea air and bathing. I did in confidence tell Mr. and Mrs. Creasy I was going to enter into a new connexion; that I was at a loss to name it seriously to Miss Sharpe, for though she had seen some letters and the gentleman call upon me, yet I believe she had

* While I was at Creasy's I had two or three large baskets of fish, fowl, fruit, and vegetables sent from London twice a week or oftener. I considered Creasy had a family and did not wish to be under any obligation. I took him to Margate at a great expense, his children afterwards to Brighton. I made him a present of a dozen of silver forks, his wife an elegant cloak, toys to his children without number. Mrs. Creasy asked me to buy the children cloaths at Brighton, but never offered to pay for them. She thought my footman and cook quite an acquisition to her establishment. Surely they were worthy of the victuals I provided? they would have shared it at home with less work. Mr. Creasy now says he pilfered my property to pay for my board. If he had any intention to charge for it, why did he not send me a bill for it, as we usually balanced accounts once a week, of all that he paid, received, or transacted for me? Why did he omit so large a demand? He has taken property of mine to the amount of 700 l. as he says to pay for my board! Of these articles I shall introduce an inventory. I likewise sent for wine, as I wanted it to Mr. Best's, while at Creasy's. .

at

at that time no idea that I should accede to it. I knew she would be much concerned, especially if it did not prove for my real happiness. I consulted Mr. and Mrs. Creasy as friends, as people that had long been married, and from whom I expected some serious advice, particularly as it concerned Miss Sharpe, for whom they had so many years expressed a friendship.

Some accommodations in the house might lead the surveyor or Oakley to suspect they were for a gentleman; but it was impossible for any body to be more close than I was. If questioned I made a point to evade it, as a matter of no importance to any but myself. When I returned to Brighton, I ventured to hint it to Miss Sharpe, who very much opposed it. The hurry of the journey, and the emotions of my own mind after another anonymous letter, brought on a violent fit of illness; at this interval we received the most friendly and feeling sympathy from the amiable Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton of Brighton, who shewed my dear friend the greatest attention. Mrs. Hamilton offered her services to sit up, or do any thing in her power to relieve my afflicted friend; yet Mrs. Hamilton has a large family of her own, the regu-

la-

lation of which reflects the highest honour on her as a wife and mother. These and a friend or two that visited them, were the only associates we had there. Yet my conduct, and the company I kept were represented as being very improper, not only to the colonel in the anonymous letters, but was likewise mentioned to us before we left the Heath by Mr. Parker.

My illness, and a difference in consequence of the incendiary letters, with my positively declaring that I would have some settlement made for Miss Sharpe, again delayed our union.

We returned from Brighton in October, and then went into the Paragon house, which was still so unfinished that we could not enter the front door for the scaffold, and we were absolutely obliged to live immured in a small room on the basement story. This would have been intolerable if I had not had a more pleasing expectation in view.

In the summer I had a sociable body made to fit the carriage of the coach, by Mr. Hatchett, for which I paid. This has been alledged as another criminal act of mine, while Creasy is pitied for selling it for a fourth of the value.

After I returned from Brighton I paid such of the
trade-

tradesmen as had produced their bills, examined by the surveyor, namely, the plasterer, the chimney piece manufacturer, one carpenter for an aviary, another for the swing, garden seats, &c. besides gardener's bills, and in fact, all the bills that were presented to me; and I applied to the surveyor for the rest.

If the tradesmen supposed I had plenty of money, and it was no consequence how much unnecessary expense they put me to, or how much they charged for what they did, they were the swindlers. An honest man will produce his estimate, his bill of parcels, his six months account, &c. in a regular way; my tradesmen* have not produced any. They all greatly exceeded their time and orders: and when their conduct is impartially considered, I think they deserve no pity, let their loss be what it may. I paid upwards of 2000*l.*† to various tradesmen between my leaving Crooms Hill, and the February following.

From October to Christmas, we had a most fatigue-

* Except Mr. Pierce, and Messrs. Ord and Morris, Messrs. Hatchett likewise sent the balance of theirs.

† Many of these sums are stated in my Address to the Public, price six-pence; but sums for house keeping, &c. are not enumerated.

ing time; the workmen with their masters were continually traversing the house, to see or do something that was unfinished. The servants were either at play with the labourers, or complaining of their dirt and litter; and were constantly cleaning and re-cleaning, doing and undoing; and I am sure the penance we performed in it (if we had no better hope,) was punishment sufficient, even if we had made some provision for ourselves out of the property. I have not only lost all I paid for while at the Heath, but all I removed from Crooms Hill, besides having my character and reputation hashed up without mercy, and my future prospects sadly obscured; though if England has any longer reason to boast of her laws, my cause will some time or other be redressed; or I am sure it will stain the annals of the present century.

It may here be asked why the colonel* did not interfere in the repairs of the house? Suppose I did not chuse to permit him; I had been a house-keeper long enough to order my concerns till he had a legal

* The Misses of Greenwich and Blackheath like to range the Park, and flirt about to be talked of and envied by their competitors, when they think an advantageous offer is in the way. Ours had been an attachment for many years, cemented by dis-appointment, yet doubly cemented by a most flattering renewal.

right to do so. And suppose I did not choose my neighbour gossips at Greenwich to know he had any concern in it. What of all that? There was no compulsion in those tradesmen to engage. I am sure me, they did one thing after another without consulting, or giving me any idea of the expense. I never employed any body to make any representations of my property to them; their business was simply with me on my own account, they had done business for me before, (the major part of them) and my character was well established.

I believe my conduct was as chaste and upright as that of any woman in that, or any adjoining parish; nor can any one prove any thing against me, for all the clamour of the day: the generality of the people who have vilified me, are the heralds only of their own malevolence and folly, for no two have agreed in their reports and opinions; and I am sure they will not bear cross examination; nor will their conduct stand the test of scrutiny with mine.

It is surprising any rational being for a moment can suppose I had no expectation! no motive! Had I been a swindler, I should have sold the property and set off with the money. Did I want opportunity to do it? No, if I had intended to autho-

rise a sale* of the property, one person might as well have done it as another.

In December I received an anonymous letter which had been sent to the colonel; it cautioned him against a connexion with a woman involved in debt, and a very base character; it intimated that some other person paid me attention at the time, &c. but the most striking circumstance was, that I owed Mr. Oakley 1000*l.*; that he talked of it publicly. The colonel advised me to send for Oakley and tell him of it, demand his bill, and dismiss him.

I acquainted Creasy of this, and asked him to meet Oakley as a witness; he did so. Mr. Oakley altogether denied the charge, expressed himself quite satisfied as to the safety of his money, and seemed very eager to pursue the business. He repeated his agreement, that it was at twelve months credit, &c. I thought it might be the malicious invention of some person who envied Oakley the job, and therefore suffered him to proceed.

About this time Mr. Crighton, upholder, who had

* See Who are the Swindlers? Page 12, Second Edition.

furnished me two rooms, * called one morning early, and sent up his name; Miss Sharpe was gone to London. I was dressing, but supposing he had called to see his work now it was fixed, I hastened down to him. I saw a decent looking man stand in the hall, whom I asked if he came from Mr. Crighton; he replied Mr. Crighton was in the parlour. I went in, inviting his companion to follow, which he modestly declined. After the usual compliment of good morning, to which Crighton made no reply, he rummaged his pocket, took out a paper, and throwing it on the table, said, This is my bill. He then ran as fast as he could out of the house. I was quite struck with the excentricity of his behaviour, but more surprised when his companion came into the room, bowing and apologizing, that it appeared very strange to him. I replied, "So it does to me." He then told me he had an action. I really thought at first, that Mr. Crighton might be subject to derangement, and that

* The latter end of July, or the beginning of August. This was property paid for, by me, and sold by Creasy under the execution he so artfully obtained.

the man was his keeper. I supposed this action was the result of some anonymous letter; on that ground I excused him; yet he might have brought his bill and asked for payment without, in so unhandsome a way, putting me to about 11*l.* expense. I made no secret of this business, but called in Mr. Searles the surveyor to ask his advice; who declaimed violently against the transaction, but advised me to pay it, and get rid of it. Soon after the man's entrance came the attorney and another, who objected to take a draft on the banker, and afterwards pretended they disputed paying it, though I had left some hundreds there the day before. After giving the bailiff a good dinner and a piece of gold, we got rid of him. I cannot say this was a *touching* interview, for the good man stood or sat at the extremity of the room, and looked all the while as if he was doing penance; and I went about my house, as usual without, his attendance. As long as our laws sanction violent hands to be laid upon people without any previous demand made, or notice given, I hope this *lamb** will be employed in such cases: I think he is an honour to his honourable profession.

* His name was Lamb.

I did

I did not mention this to the colonel, as Miss Sharpe had recommended me to Mr. Crighton, he having done business for her at Crooms Hill. The colonel at this time* was going to Ireland, and was to be absent six weeks. A few days after Oakley † came down to tell me he was dissatisfied, and wanted security. I had been that day in London; and returned late in the evening; I asked him why he had refused security or to bring his bill, when the one was offered, and the other enquired for? He did not seem to know what answer to give; but I told him I should consult a friend and let him know.

A few nights after Evans his partner, and their attorney, came to the Heath with a bill of sale; (which however, they did not attempt to induce me to sign on any false pretences, as Creasy did) I refused to sign it, saying it was unjust towards my other creditors; they pretended they did not want to sell any

* Christmas 1800.

† I had some furniture for the drawing room at Crooms Hill in 1799, and paid him for it, when he sent his bill. This furniture, with several cart loads beside, that were not bought of him, I afterwards employed Oakley's people to remove to the heath.

thing; but I would not trust them. I did not see them, being very much indisposed and gone to bed. Miss Sharpe brought the deed up to me. The next day I informed Mr. Creasy of this; he censured Oakley very much; said he would speak to him and persuade him to keep to his agreement, which he would swear, was twelve months credit. As Creasy talked in this way I supposed he would be the last man in the world to ask for a similar deed.

Oakley was very much dissatisfied at my refusal; and having once asked him to direct my servant to drive the nearest way into St. James's Square, to the Bishop of London's*, he went post haste there to enquire of my property, &c. I should suppose his impertinence did not meet a very welcome reception. I desired Creasy would go to him and reason with

* Having some business with his lady, and not exactly knowing which side of the Square the house was, I asked one of Oakley's people to direct the servant. This was magnified into a cousinship, and I believe some extra drapery was added to my curtains in consequence. Mrs. Porteus, being in Hampshire, I wrote to her from Brighton, and there received her answer. Had I asked the address of a curate, or an inn keeper's daughter, Oakley would not have supposed me related. How the world turns about in a few years!

him

him on the propriety of waiting the stipulated time, as Creasy was a witness of his agreement. Instead of doing so, he went to Oakley, and they laid their heads together to devise a plan to get all the property on the premises into their own hands, to the prejudice of myself and creditors. Creasy on his return said he thought Oakley would wait, but he wished I could give him a few hundreds. I was to receive 600*l.* the next week, and I said Oakley should have 500*l.* of it (on the 7th of February). I wrote to make him the offer, but had no answer. Creasy seemed very assiduous and apparently concerned for my health, which had suffered much from being so perplexed. He said he never was so poor, that he was sorry he had not the money at command to offer; that if he had, I should be welcome to it till I received some. He said if I would permit him to pledge my plate, &c. he could raise money sufficient; his brother* often had things of the kind from the first families: that they would be very safe, and I could have them again. I objected to it at first, but by persuasion consented to his taking the following articles on the 30th of January, but of which I never

* Creasy, a pawnbroker at Deptford.

had

had any account; nor do I know whether he took them to sell, to pledge, or for his own use; I demanded the duplicates, but he did not produce them; I afterwards demanded * them in writing, and Miss Sharpe applied for them in June.

*Plate taken by Creasy on the 30th of January, 1801,
and never accounted for by him.*

A silver tea pot, sugar basin, and cream ewer, engraved in suite, never used.

A silver ink stand, new.

Twelve large table forks, do.

Twelve desert, do. do.

Three do. fruit knives and forks.

A butter, cheese, and large fish knife.

A large soup ladle.

Four plain silver ladles for saucers.

Four very elegant double gilt do. on silver.

Four salt spoons, to match the last.

Four salt dishes, to elegant cut glass, silver, gilt.

A large gravy spoon and eight large table spoons.

* By Sharpe, when Creasy sent him to Ware, in March following; I likewise gave Martyr and Monk authority to receive them for the benefit of the creditors.

Twelve

Twelve desert spoons, twelve large tea spoons, two salt spoons.

A marrow do. and six egg spoons.

Six more gilt tea spoons.

A pair of snuffers and stand, quite new.

An oval plated bread basket.

Two very elegant velvet cloaks with fine broad laces.

Two new India shawls, a fine new muslin cloak with elegant broad lace, full trimmed.

A gown piece of gold muslin, unmade.

A remnant of do.

Fine French cambric for nine pocket handkerchiefs.

Quantity of fine new damask napkins.

Five full trimmed deep handkerchiefs, with three yards of fine lace to each, some at 3*l.* per yard.

Four elegant new muslin dresses, full trimmed with fine laces, some at 1*l.* 10*s.* and 2*l.* per yard.

An elegant gold muslin dress, and one clear book do. embroidered, each, the gown piece, 12 guineas, and trimmed with nine yards of lace each, at 1*l.* 5*s.* per yard.

An

An elegant French box, jewelled, two diamond rings.

A pearl necklace quite new, two pair of pearl earrings.

An elegant montre, with miniature set round with large pearls, and hair devices, &c. Another large jewelled frame for a miniature, a gold necklace, &c.

The morning that Creasy took these things to town, Oakley and Evans came to Blackheath early. They had some conversation with Creasy, and afterwards with Miss Sharpe. I expected Mr. Dobie down that day to consult him, to request a given time for the tradesmen to wait for the settlement of their accounts, which had not yet been delivered. I informed Mr. Creasy that Mr. Dobie was coming; that I believed he thought it advisable to call the creditors together, and lay some proposals before them. Creasy said, he thought such a scheme would make all the creditors troublesome; that surely Dobie * did not consider my interest, or
he

* I find Mr. Dobie has not considered my interest; that he has been the person that has principally inflamed the public mind. Mr. Dobie did nothing for me but what he was well paid for. I never authorized him to say any thing about the bond

he would not advise me so ill. Creasy wished me to go that day to London with him: I went, expecting to return early to meet Mr. Dobie at dinner. On our way to town, Creasy put into my hands a list of the bills he had accepted, and an account of little things he had paid for me at Greenwich, and of the money he had received for me. This account was balanced all but 2*l.* 19*s.* which was all that I owed him at the time; and he had in his possession all the plate that I have just enumerated. I then gave him a Scotch bill on Coutts and Co. for 12*l.* 16*s.* for which he has never accounted. He said, "I don't like to tease; but some of my friends have been talking to me about my acceptances. I wish you would sign a memorandum for them? and I wish you would let Searle settle your business for you?" Creasy took a hackney coach, at Charing-cross, and went to pledge the plate (he said in St. Martin's lane). He did not produce the duplicates: I never

bond or factory, nor sent any person to enquire of him. I applied to him for a letter lately, which he acknowledges in an answer, but on my sending Miss Sharpe to demand it, he says it is all visionary; that Faskally was sold 30 years ago. Pray does that prevent it being mine, or my having a legal claim on it? I believe it was likewise re-fold in November last.

faw

saw them. I gave Creasy an inventory of it, in which an article or two that I had put in after I had made the inventory was inserted in pencil. I believe it was the box that was omitted, and written with a pencil. Creasy appointed to meet me at Searle's, his attorney. I called and found him there; and, having some other calls to make, I left him. He told me he had not got money enough for the bills. I think he said he only got 110*l.* for all the property he had pledged; but he produced no voucher. Still I had not the least suspicion of his integrity. As a tradesman, a man with a family, the friend of Miss Sharpe, and, as I supposed, my friend, I did not suspect he would persuade me to do wrong, or that he would injure me. He appointed four o'clock * for me to sign the memorandum of his bills, and, as I supposed, instructed Searle to write it. I thought the observation he made was just, that if my cre-

* In consequence of this detention I did not return in time to see Mr. Dobie; indeed Creasy said every thing he could to oppose the plan Mr. Dobie proposed. By his advice I applied a few days after to Mr. Dobie for Mr. Cator's agreement, and left it in Searle's hands as my attorney, where it now remains. The creditors do not chuse to take it and sell the house. I suppose that is visionary!

ditors

ditors would not give *me* a few months (as I had expected), they might dispute his claim; and I knew, when the bills became due, he was liable to be sued as well as myself for the amount, though there was not a tradesman, in whose hands the bills were, but what, I believe, would have given me time if Creasy would have let me apply for it. They did wait as it was, for Creasy could not get the money until he had sworn to many well-rounded lies in the court of Equity. I met Creasy at Searle's about four o'clock; he went out a few minutes, he said, to look for his brother. Searle was there alone, writing. Creasy re-entered. Searle said, "This is the paper Mr. Creasy was mentioning about his bills; will you be so good as to sign it?" I appealed to Creasy, to know if it was right. He replied, "Yes, I believe it is all right; we are only among friends, you know, for my part I am quite concerned that Oakley has acted so; it has made you quite ill." Searle held the paper on the desk as if pointing to the place where I was to sign it; it was almost dark; I could hardly see my name when I had written it, nor do I know whether there was any writing on the paper except my name. We came away immediately after. Creasy sat on the

the

the window in Searle's chamber while I signed the paper*; he did not read it or look at it then, but we had been some time with Searle before I called, therefore I supposed he knew all about it. Nor had I the least suspicion of a man whose family had been on terms of intimacy with us so long, whose children and nieces had been with us years, and who professed so much kindness, and had received so many benefits from Miss Sharpe and myself, exclusive of his declamations against Oakley, (who is by far the most honest of the two) for asking me to sign a bill of sale, a less destructive instrument than the one he so wickedly obtained.

After Creasy had induced me to sign this deed, and we were in the carriage with an intention to return home, he asked me if I could not borrow him some money in town; that he should come short now.

He added, "They seem very obliging to you at Ord's, St. Paul's; I dare say you may get 50*l.* there!" I asked Mr. Ord, who very obligingly gave me all the cash he had.

As I was returning home, Creasy said, "Though I left Oakley very civil, yet I suspect he has mischief

* This was the bond in judgment, under which he seized the property, after inveigling me out of the house so artfully.]

in view; I wish you would go from home a few days.”
 —I replied, No; such a step might alarm the creditors; he added, Oakley’s was a large sum to be arrested for, that there was no giving bail in term time; that if I left the Heath till after the 12th of February, Oakley could not hurt me. I told Creasy I had the promise of 600*l.* five of which I would give Oakley on the 7th.—That I would not go.

On the Monday following, I went to town to try to get some money for Oakley, and had every reason to believe I should have it the latter end of the week. I should have had no difficulty in procuring twice the sum, if I had had the lease of the Paragon house in my own hands; but the Colonel had objected to the lease * being executed in the joint names of Miss Sharpe and myself, as he wished to purchase it on his own account. It is not to be wondered at,

* This circumstance is a further proof that my motive was not gain. Mr. Dobie very early drew the draught of the lease; Mr. Cator would have signed it, had I not told him that I intended to purchase it in July, and that his agreement to grant a lease, or make the title clear, was as satisfactory as any other deed. Mr. Dobie said it was. Surely I had some motive for deferring it: an explanation of which was not required by Mr. Cator.

if

if I now began to suspect the colonel did not intend to act uprightly. I knew he was in possession of my Scotch papers. Yet, he gained nothing by encouraging me to exceed my intended plan at the Heath, and which the tradesmen willingly extended for me. I was very anxious to hear from him, and at the time knew not exactly where to address him.

I could only excuse him on account of the high winds, which might detain his letters. I believe his confidence was shaken by the anonymous letters; that he was displeased that I had accepted Oakley's apology, or shewed any attention to Creasy or his family. I was then ignorant of the contents of many of the letters he had received, or Creasy should not have entered my house.

On the Monday, when in town, I borrowed 45*l.* more, and gave to Creasy. He again urged my going from home; unconscious of intending any injury, I objected to it; nor did I suppose but that Oakley would wait till the 7th of February; and I really now believe, though he has acted so illegally*,
that

* In entering our joint dwelling house, and without producing any written authority, bribing or persuading the person

that he would have waited, if Creasy had not interfered.

Oakley knew he had furnished his part of the house in a much more expensive style than I had ordered, and that he sent me many things of his own accord; he was continually persuading me something was wanted. He had trusted me as Miss Robertson at Crooms Hill; he did the same at the Paragon; he removed our goods there; he had agreed for twelve months credit, and after six months were passed, he again ratified his agreement in the presence of Miss Sharpe and Creasy. I hope their conduct towards me will be a public caution; every one ought to be guarded against men that can act such a part. Perhaps, if Oakley's timber merchants, and those who have dealings with him, were to break through their engagements, and fetch away every article he had not paid for, he might see some empty

son I left in care of it, to let him take away in the night of the 5th of February, not only the goods sent on my account to Blackheath, but also the furniture he had sold to us, and been lawfully paid for, while we lived at Crooms Hill, as well as several articles, our joint property, that we had paid for years ago, some valuable paintings, &c. and some new articles had of other tradesmen. He broke many locks to ransack the drawers, took our papers, &c. &c.

walls, both in Bond Street and at St. Paul's. He fetched away *what I had paid for* *, and what had been mine and Miss Sharpe's for years. He violated, took, or destroyed my papers. He depreciated and vilified my character. He went to injure me in the esteem of those to whom I looked for thousands, but to whom I never directed Oakley.

This is a city of London tradesman ! What will a foreigner say of our laws, if these things go unpunished ?

On the Tuesday Creasy again mentioned my going from home to avoid Oakley ; I persisted in refusing ; he said, " If people know there is a trap laid for them, I think they are wise to keep out of it." I wish I had a knowledge of the trap *he had laid*, I would have taken care to have blunted the edge of it †, notwithstanding he and his attorney had (as they thought) so ingeniously set it.

* He was told at the time, that such articles were not had from him ; he d——d them, and said, he would have all he could get.

† I was as unsuspicious of the nature of the instrument I signed, or its contents, at that instant, as I was when only a week old. Nor did I know what it was, till I sent an attorney down to see it, when I heard Creasy was selling off the goods.

On

On Wednesday Creasy wrote the letter to Miss Sharpe, that is already published*. Miss Sharpe persuaded me to go. We went to London, where I slept that night. Miss Sharpe returned to the Heath, taking Sharpe's wife with her, to leave to take care of the house, as we proposed going to Suffolk for a few days, till the term expired, as Creasy had advised. Miss Sharpe was to bring a few changes of things with her, for the time we expected to be absent. She carefully covered up all the best furniture, locked the doors of all the rooms, and charged Mrs. Sharpe not to let any one enter them. Creasy came soon after the departure of Miss Sharpe, brought a post chaise, and took to London the following things, of which he and Mrs. Sharpe pretended to take an inventory, but which has never been produced.

A pair of elegant silver plated urns, never had been used†.

An

* In "Who are the Swindlers?" I was walking in the grounds, and had just been feeding my rabbits with some leaves I had gathered; I neither thought that they would receive no more from my hand, or that they were so near changing their quarters and their owner, most likely for one less kind to them.

† I am given to understand, that he swore in the court of Equity, that he took this property out of our house, to pay

An elegant plated egg stand, ditto.

A trifle dish and stand, quite new, very elegant.

Four elegant comport dishes and covers.

A pair of hash dishes.

A soup tureen in suite.

A butter cooler, cover, and stand.

A tea pot and stand.

A gilt wine funnel.

Three pair of bracket candlesticks.

Two pair of table candlesticks.

A pair of elegant branch lighters fo ditto.

Twelve desert knives and forks.

Two chamber candlesticks.

Two taper ditto.

One round bread basket.

Six oval dishes for salts, with handsome glasses.

A pair of snuffers and stand.

A large and a small waiter.

Two pair of nut crackers.

Two pair of elegant bottle stands.

Some silver labels for decanters.

Sundry silver and odd table and desert tea spoons.

for my board in August 1800, when I was by invitation at his house, and almost kept his family with my provisions!

A very

A very large elegant quite new strong plated venison dish, on a new construction, never used.

A toast rack.

A very large sized new Marfeilles quilt.

A very large fine new counterpane.

Six small new counterpanes.

Several other large handsome counterpanes, that had been washed.

Two pair of very fine Holland sheets, never used ; the upper ones trimmed, to turn over with cambric*.

The day after Creasy removed those things, and converted them (or the profits of them) to his own use, he never having accounted for any thing yet. He applied by his attorney to Miss Sharpe, to know if she could borrow any money ready against the bills became due. By his persuasion Miss Sharpe

* These things, and perhaps many more that were valuable, Creasy took away, before he let Oakley have any thing, and the day before he put in the execution. This is the man that many are pitying, as a great loser ! though he had not paid 50*l*. for me at the time.

applied to a friend to lend 400*l.* or 500*l.* Creasy took the letter*, and would have taken the money, if he could have got it, although he knew he had been privy to Oakley's taking away part of the household goods the night before, and that he had himself put in an execution to sell off the rest.

Miss Sharpe met me at Stratford on the fifth, and the day following we returned to London, intending, after we had seen or heard from Creasy, and given her brother orders about our letters, to go to Ipswich for a few days.—I being very unwell, we agreed that Miss Sharpe should go on the business, and I would wait for her at Mrs. Hardy's in Somerset Street (whose children we had educated). Mrs. Hill, with seeming kindness, apologized for the indifferent accommodations of her house, but requested we would stay there the few days we wished to be from home. I told her I could say little to it till I saw Miss Sharpe, who called in the evening, saying, she had paid the fare in the Norwich mail. But Mr. and

* When Miss Sharpe wrote this letter, she did not know that any thing had been touched at the Heath. Miss Sharpe and I had slept the night of the 5th of February at Mrs. Hill's, at Stratford.

Mrs.

Mrs. Hardy prevailed on us to give up the fare, and remain with them.

On Monday evening Miss Sharpe saw Mr. Creasy at her brother's; he then informed her that Oakley had taken away the goods. Mr. Creasy added, "I have now had an inventory taken of every thing in the house, and nobody can touch a thing." We supposed this was done out of care and kindness; Miss Sharpe saw him again the next day; we had directed Mrs. Sharpe to send all our letters to her husband, who was to bring them to us. Mrs. Sharpe came to town (we have been told, with a large bundle) on the Tuesday morning, and told Mr. Sharpe the things were lotted out to be viewed, and that Mr. Creasy was going to sell them.

Miss Sharpe again saw Mr. Creasy on Tuesday evening, and mentioned to him what she had heard of the things being lotted for sale; he replied, he believed they must be sold, as he could not take up the bills when they became due, and that my creditors were making a great noise; he added, "If you and Miss Robertson would assign the agreement for the lease, I should have something to offer the creditors. Miss Sharpe begged she might have her furniture

and clothes, or that she might go back to the Heath. Creasy replied, if we would assign the lease, it would all be soon settled. Miss Sharpe agreed to do so, and to persuade me to do it. Creasy promised * Sharpe and his wife † a great many things out of our house, if they would persuade us to acquiesce with him.

Miss Sharpe, having assigned the lease on condition of Creasy's letting her have her property, she sent her brother down to claim it for her. Now I believe he began to accept the wages of iniquity, and for present gain suffered himself to be ground into an edged tool, to destroy his sister. He accepted bribes from all parties, was true to none; he intercepted letters from one, and put into the hands of another; and while Sharpe was receiving gratuities from all sides, he in every instance betrayed every one that reposed the least confidence in him. Our letters to Creasy

* The pickles, preserves, soap, and candles, sugars, and other stores in the store-room, &c.

† I had paid for the education of their child at a school at Brentwood, had presented them with many articles of furniture, lent and given them money, and almost clothed all their family.

or the creditors he opened and suppressed ; he gave what Creasy entrusted him to deliver to us, to Martyr, and he gave Martyr's (or any of the creditor's) letters to Creasy*.

I did not understand the law, I only knew I had paid away Creasy's acceptances, that they were nearly due ; some in February, some in March, and some in April. One that he has charged me with of 250 l. was lost by Sharpe, or embezzled, but it never was produced for payment. However, Creasy charged that with the rest, and several others, that he had money from me to pay.

I did not suppose that those acceptances would warrant his going into my house to seize and sell all the property he found on the premises†. I knew the parties who held the bills were respectable, and did not believe they would proceed to any coercive measures, had they been due.

* He opened one in presence of Searle that contained bills, addressed to Ord and Morris.

† To ascertain this, I employed Henderfon of Goodman's Fields, who went down to see the deed, and who had some communication with some of the creditors, but neither he nor they took any step to act in concert with me, to set it aside, or to prosecute Oakley ; both of which might have been done immediately.

I did

I did not hear as I expected from my absent friend. I did not know whether it would meet his approbation to state exactly the case to my creditors. Oakley and Creasy appeared to have acted such a part that I could not expect with comfort to return home. Sharpe and his wife, for fear of losing their bribes, were opening and suppressing my letters. At this time Sharpe brought the assignment of the lease, which was represented to me as a final settlement of all the disagreeables. I asked Hardy if he understood it, and would have me sign it: he appeared to think it all very right: so it might, had Creasy acted as he led me to suppose. The next thing I heard was, that the goods were selling; I then prevailed on Mr. Hardy to go with his attorney* to see under what authority, and directed Henderson to bring my papers. They went to Greenwich, but did no good. Instead of moving the court against the attorney that took the judgment, and calling Creasy to account for what he removed, as well as prosecuting Oakley and his confederates, he lost time, and made a great pretence about writing to Scotland, neglecting the

* This was the first business I employed Henderson for.

business close to his fingers, and in which my creditors, and self and Miss Sharpe particularly, were so interested. He would do nothing against Oakley, Creasy or Searle, because he did not hear from Mr. Robertson, of Dalkeith.

Had the property immediately been removed from Oakley and Creasy, there would have been a very good dividend* for the creditors; and Mr. Robertson or the colonel might have been enquired after at leisure.

Henderfon was chiefly employed to recover the property that belonged to Miss Sharpe. It was proposed to him to call a meeting of the creditors; but he advised me to keep out of their way.

I wrote to some of the creditors to state that I owed no money to Creasy, and had not knowingly authorised him to touch the property. I request-

* All the new property for which I stood indebted, was on the premises; what had been removed from Crooms Hill was there likewise; the carriages I had paid for; likewise, many things very expensive about the grounds; I had paid all the bills that had been delivered, and given money on account for others; therefore there ought to have been sufficient to pay every thing; and had the house been viewed with tickets, and every thing adjusted as by us, it was so sweet a place it would have fetched any sum.

ed they would take some steps to bring him and Oakley to account. Instead of coming forward to act in concert with me against the plunderers, they were going about to vilify and brand me with every thing that was disgusting; and instead of serving themselves by co-operating with me in seeking justice, they were incensing the public at large against me, preventing any one from giving the least assistance, and by such means they guaranteed Oakley and Creasy with the sole possession of the property to their own loss; contenting themselves with making physical disquisitions on my sex, as my appearance rendered that so very doubtful to people who had been intimate with, or in the habit of doing business for me the last seven years.

When Henderfon found that the creditors of Greenwich took no rational steps for the recovery of the property, and Mr. Dobie and all joined in the opinion that it was all visionary, he began to think it of no consequence; and because he could not hear from Mr. Robertson, they were not willing to believe there was any property at the Heath, though they had seen it; and *seeing*, we are told, *is believing*. Creasy made no offer of the assignment of the lease

as

as he promised, to the creditors ; nor did he dismiss the sheriff's officer. He sold all he could, and he did not care how* ; instead of applying for keys, he suffered every thing to be broke open. I believe very little wine *was sold*, though I had paid for a great deal. Mrs. Sharpe acknowledged they were all intoxicated and cascading on the carpets every night. The auctioneer's daughters had a nice rummage over our clothes ; I would not say that some of them did not stick to their fingers ; such things are very tempting.

I sent Henderson to fetch some family papers that I had left sealed up at Prescott's, as I supposed I might have some relative to Mr. Robertson among them. I had a claim, for debt, in the papers I sent him for, and a reversionary interest in the estate they belonged to. Instead of going to fetch me the papers, he went to break them open, to gratify his own cu-

* Had the house been well arranged before it was viewed, and a clever auctioneer employed, and all the articles that were made to fit the house sold with it, for the benefit of the creditors, it would have fetched a great deal more. Creasy did not advertise it ; he published part of a catalogue at a time, and *that* in the night ; he had hand-bills printed to say particular circumstances prevented the clothes being viewed.

riosity.

riosity. Finding they were not, perhaps, what his imagination led him to suppose, he set the city of London quite in an uproar. I was now a swindler, and every thing that was vile: he went to search after people that he had no business with, and who had nothing to do with mine. He brought a wretch who had been cloathed and fed by my bounty, to say she would swear I never possessed a shilling of property, and had no expectation of any! The cloaths on her back I had paid for! I had a note in my pocket wherein she solicited me to pay her rent! I had supplied her long with provisions of every description, as the tradesmen whom I continually paid for it can testify! I had supplied her with money! with bedding! with cloathes for herself, her husband, and children, and that not a few!! I had given security to keep her husband* from prison! This wretch knew nothing at all of my circumstances since I was seventeen years of age, nor could she tell what connexions

* I am well assured she does not know her own husband, who he is, or where he came from, or from whom he sprung.

I had done every thing in my power to serve them, and only requested they would never say any thing about me, as persons of the name of Larkin resided in Greenwich, and I did not wish to be troubled about the debt.

I might

I might have formed, or what property I might have acquired. Sometimes she had not seen me for several years. Yet she now volunteered her services to prove that I must be a swindler, and had no property, or expectation of any; alledged that I was mad, and had been so many years, &c.

Reader, this wicked woman, with the same breath said, she was my mother!!!

I never found her such; a beast, with more propriety may claim the parental character! they fulfil the duties of nature. You, base and sordid woman, would sell one of your own hands, by taking a bribe in the other! Think not that the riches you now are in possession of, and which you think are laid up for many years, will blunt the thorns in your dying pillow, or assuage the horror that will seize your soul! It will not extinguish the flames of hell! or stifle the never dying worm of a guilty conscience. May your hard, your adamant heart, be molified by the hand of Omnipotence, and you be led to seek that forgiveness, of which there is hope, while the lamp of life is unextinguished.

The

The day after this interview, Henderson told me to be expeditious in leaving town, as he should be obliged to give up my residence by 12 o'clock. He told me I should be advertised for contempt of court, but would not explain why. I knew I had done nothing, but I did not know what they might alledge against me, or even swear to ; they seemed all to act so mercenary and so wicked a part.

I was conscious I had not intentionally injured any person, and I knew I was a great sufferer. I had heard and read a great deal about the boasted laws of our country ; but, I thought, if this was law, there seemed no justice in it. What contempt of court meant, I was wholly ignorant of ; but to be advertised, I thought, was very shocking.

The next day, February 26th, I went to Enfield ; Mrs. Hardy went with me ; I was very ill. I went to Mr. Parker's on the Chace, whom I had known some years, and had spent some time at his house the last summer.

I knew Mrs. Hardy was fond of the country ; and as it was a very fine day, I thought it a compliment to ask her to go. I took a coach from her door, and

a glass

a glass coach after we got out of town, both of which I paid for. I had very little money ; for all I could collect I had given to Creasy.

It was not convenient for me to stay at Mr. Parker's, as he had a fever in his house, and his son *laid dead*. But Mrs. Hardy (whom he had never seen before) told him such a tale of my swindling, that I was glad to get away.

I returned to London, and went that night by the mail to Ipswich. When Mrs. Hardy went home, she sent for Henderson to insult Miss Sharpe, telling her to go after the Swindler, &c. that we should be tried at the Old Bailey *, and transported ; and that Miss Sharpe would be taken up as a swindler, if she was found with me.

Miss Sharpe, having no one to call her a coach, left the clothes there till she could send for them. When Miss Sharpe went to fetch the things, Hardy said, she should not have mine ; that if I would not let him

* It is now very evident, that they said these cruel things to frighten us, that we might go, and leave them in possession of the trunk of clothes, &c. all our [remaining property ! as they supposed.

have them to sell to pay Henderfon, he would seal them up, and send them to Bow Street *.

I was then at Ipswich. This wicked Hardy and his wife, I suppose, thought these things might give consequence to their daughters, and at least recommend them to notice. When Miss Sharpe went up stairs in order to separate our clothes, Hardy, his wife, a niece, and their daughter, accompanied her as witnesses. They repeatedly desired Miss Sharpe to be particular, that she took nothing but what belonged to her.

Soon after, through Sharpe, they applied to me for an order to sell a part to pay Henderfon (who did nothing but mischief). I said, his bill ought to be first produced and examined; they said it was 10 £. but I never saw it. The clothes Hardy kept were worth 60 £. and upwards; he pretended himself to value them at 10 £. and has kept them ever since;

* Had I been a swindler, and there had been any ground for an indictment, why did not Hardy and Henderfon act according to the law? and not take my clothes to compound a felony, as they were reporting in the world I had committed; but which, in fact, were only wicked threats, putting us in fear, in order to extort the property, and which is in itself a gross fraud.

neither

neither he nor Henderfon have given any account thereof. Thus I was left with only what I had on, and no money. The conduct of all parties so overwhelmed my spirit, (which is naturally very high) that I had neither power or inclination to act. I appealed to the creditors, whose situation was, as to loss, similar to my own; for Oakley and Creasy had usurped their right; but, as if bereft of reason, they did not take a rational step.

Martyr filed a bill for Creasy to shew on what ground he acted; but Martyr did not make me a party to it; and he could not tell when he had Creasy's answers, whether they were true or false; and he got possession of the money in spite of them. I do not suppose that such a collection of lies was ever sworn to in this country before.

A fortnight after the sale of the furniture, Creasy sold all our clothes, trinkets, &c. he even refused Miss Sharpe a few necessaries, though he had no power to touch her property.

Miss Sharpe went from Hardy's to her brother's. On the Sunday, Mrs. Neale, who had boarded with us some years at Crooms Hill, called upon Miss

Sharpe, to tell her that I visited gentlemen in town improperly, and in improper places; that a friend of hers had known it long *. That I used to buy goods, and leave the carriage at a distance, while I went to pledge them, &c. that she had always thought I had dressed like a kept woman †, &c. &c. These things told on a Sabbath day, just as the old woman had retired from the Sacrament, had great influence for the moment on the mind of Miss Sharpe; she supposed it might be so, as she heard such horrid things from all sides. It had been said publicly at the sale, I was worse than the late Mrs. Rudd; some said I was then going about London to deceive in *men's clothes*; others said I was a man in *woman's*

* She stated, that I was connected with swindlers, who lent me money at exorbitant interest; when, in fact, she was the only person I ever paid interest to. For 306*l.* at 25*l.* per annum.

† She had lived six years and a half with me. I only with she, and her friend that *so well knew* these things, had to walk about with their shoes full of pease, till they found out the pawn-brokers, my places of intrigue, and the parties concerned with me! But, during this hunt, I would not allow them to take any refreshment. I am well satisfied this plan would effectually rid me of these two enemies, and it really is not an expensive one.

clothes

clothes. All brought their different suspicions, and conferred about them till they supposed them quite consolidated into facts.

And, dear reader, if you ever saw me, you will think these opinions were strongly corroborated, by my masculine appearance, strong limbs, robust make, coarse manners, and manly voice!!! I believe Mrs. Neale carried the first lecture on this subject to her church; her minister, Mr. J. Goode (who had known me some years, and both visited me, and received me into his family to stay some days at a time,) repeated this as the only reason he could assign for Miss Sharpe's affectionate attention and steady attachment to me! This was afterwards repeated publicly by Townsend of Rotherhithe, who had his daughter at our school, and who visited us! From thence it was diffused far and wide throughout the united kingdoms. It had reached Dublin in May, and I make no doubt but by this time it has reached every place between the arctic and antarctic, and may be shortly translated into all languages; that of common sense and reason only excepted.

Miss Sharpe was so harraſſed by the continual din of my enormities, that I believe ſhe thought her beſt expedient was, to turn deſerter likewise. She wrote to the family where I was at Ipſwich, not to notice me on her account ; the lady had been educated by us, and was recently married there. I left as ſoon as I poſſibly could, after the arrival of this friendly and conſolatory epiſtle.

I did not wiſh to go into London, therefore was ſet down near Walthamſtow, quite fatigued and exhausted ; and not liking to go to an inn, I enquired in the village if there were any lodgings. I was directed to a houſe, the owner of which I found I had ſome knowledge of. From thence I wrote to Miſs Sharpe, who came down to me the day after : I was then extremely ill and weak.

Miſs Sharpe (who had been accuſtomed to attend me when ill,) applied a bliſter, and uſed ſuch means as had been of uſe before. The next day I was ſomething better ; and being very anxious to know if there were any letters for me, I accompanied Miſs Sharpe to town ; for I did not yet ſuſpect Sharpe, who had entered into treaties with Creafy, Martyr, and
Hardy,

Hardy *, to assist all the parties to act against me, and of course against his sister.

I had entrusted Sharpe with several letters to deliver for me, all of which he opened, and gave to the contrary parties, or entirely suppressed, as he did not wish for any settlement of my concerns; as by such steps he would have lost all the money that was offered by the conspirators against me. As soon as we got to town, Sharpe pretended that the creditors were coming there frequently, threatening to search his house for us: that some said we should be hanged; perhaps he meant round each others necks.

I had not the least suspicion of Sharpe, indeed, I supposed him bound by every tie of gratitude; but these ties, I have found by experience, are very slender.

By Sharpe's advice we went into the country; he promised to send our letters, and do any thing

* Mrs. Hardy was seen drinking tea with Sharpe, while she was plundering his sister, and unlawfully putting her in fear, by threatening to alledge crimes against me, of which I was innocent: had I been guilty, they were very culpable, in not proceeding according to law; when counsel might have had opportunity of pleading my cause.

he could to serve us. Before I left town, I gave him a letter, addressed to a relation of mine, directing her to give him some little property, of which I thought I could make about 100*l.* for present emergencies. He broke open that letter, and went immediately and demanded the property, and sold it himself; and did not inform me, till I detected him by a letter from the party, who had given it to him, sealed up in a box, and directed to be sent to me.

We took a lodging at Ware, as cheap as we could procure one decent room. There we almost lived upon the fresh air, having little else, and I being in bed the greater part of the time.

While at Ware, I again applied, through the medium of Sharpe, for that little property. Although he had then sold it, he wrote a most cruel letter to his sister, saying, the parties would not give it up; that Hardy would not give up any part of the clothes; that he had nothing to send her, and that the creditors were with him continually. That we were described in all the public papers; that

two

two strangers * had been there, insisting to see us, and that they wanted to go up stairs to look for us.

Miss Sharpe wrote again, which, I believe, a little touched his flinty heart, and he sent one guinea.

On the 19th of March, Sharpe came to Ware, with some orders and papers from Creasy to sign; one of which was an order for him to sell the plate, &c. which he had taken. This order we burnt, and I sent him one to deliver up the duplicates to Sharpe, to convey to us, but which Creasy refused to do; and he afterwards acknowledged them in June. Sharpe seemed full of glee and spirits,

* This was true; the colonel had written to me for an explanation, and had enclosed a letter for my perusal, which, if I approved, was to be sent to Mr. Cator. He directed to Sharpe's, as desired: the letter arrived on the 26th of February, and though too late to stop the sale, would have engaged Mr. Cator's interference, and most likely have brought the colonel and I to a proper explanation. He then called to see me. Sharpe seconded all the clamor of the day; told him there was something between Creasy and me; or he would not have given the bills. He said somebody had seen me in men's clothes; that he should take no more notice of his sister for countenancing me.

came

came in a post-chaise, ordered things, drank brandy, and talked of the money he could borrow, and pretended to lend us 9*l.* more, making 10*l.* in all, which, he said, he had borrowed of a friend ; but which, in fact, was part of the produce of the property he had been selling. I thought his wheel had begun to turn on a new axis, as only at Christmas before he had borrowed money of me, saying he did not know where else apply for a guinea.

He left us the next morning, assuring us that he thought nobody would molest us ; that what was in the papers was all nonsense. He brought a letter and a tradesman's bill or two, but still kept back any letters of real use. Sharpe * advised us not to stay long at Ware, and the next morning we went to Huntingdon. As soon as Sharpe returned to London, he sent Martyr down to arrest me : we

* This was the only time he ever came to us ; but, we have been told, he procured money from the parties, on pretence of coming twice or more. He told us, while at Ware, to have our things directed in the name of Cunningham ; and, said he had told our creditors we were gone to Ireland. This he collected from the suppressed letters, and is a convincing proof he had them.

had,

had, however, left the county of Hertford before he reached us. He was obliged to return and wait till Sharpe heard from us again, before he could renew his exploits at hunting.

The middle of the following week we wrote to Sharpe, to send our letters. We waited anxiously, anticipating the postman, till Monday morning, when Miss Sharpe saw Martyr in the street: a few minutes after he came up stairs, accompanied by the sheriff's officer. I had not left my chamber; Miss Sharpe was preparing breakfast in the adjoining room. I heard some talking, but supposed it might be the people of the house. Not being dressed, I had not unlocked my chamber-door, which they had the indecency to burst open.

Martyr was blustering, swearing, and cursing, enough to petrify any one possessed of a grain of sensibility. He raised up the whole town of Huntingdon*; said I was the vilest wretch upon earth;

* In small country towns, every circumstance is immediately observed; and the singularity of these men's behaviour excited attention. I believe it was supposed that I had actually robbed them, and that I was a most vile character.

that

that I had robbed him of 1400*l.*; that I had robbed the neighbourhood, where he lived, of 15,000*l.*

I was a stranger in Huntingdon; had only been there a few days. Martyr's conduct, and the newspapers, led the inhabitants to suppose *I was* as represented. People of all descriptions lined the streets, and it was with great difficulty the chaise could draw up to Mr. Drage's mansion. The sheriff's officer was a well-behaved young man; but Monk and Martyr's behaviour and exultation, were an outrage of common decency, and such as could hardly be expected from the very lowest dregs of human nature, in the chace of a rabid animal.

Martyr insisted upon it that I never had, and was never likely to have, a shilling. *I knew* I had none then to give him. Monk and he said, that *all* the creditors *had joined together* to keep me confined for life, at Martyr and Monk's suit. If this is legal, I think our country need not boast the equity of its laws. No bill delivered! no charge made! though the bills had long been demanded. Men, who had gone on hand over head, thinking they might do just as they pleased with me and my property! I believe
either

either Martyr or Monk would have pulled down the house, if the timber and paint would have answered their purpose; and if they did not act as Oakley and Co. did, it was because they had left them nothing portable.

These writs, on which I was sued, are at the joint expense of my creditors; and the proceedings were conducted against me by the son of Martyr, who is an attorney, and the deputy-governor of the confederacy against me; for which he charges 16*l.* 15*s.*; and is now threatening the creditors with proceedings against *them*, unless they pay this bill*.

Martyr, the attorney, wrote me several letters of impertinent and expensive enquiries, which they alledged they did, in order to get information to make me a bankrupt; but, in fact, those queries had no connexion with such a subject, and proved to be the result of idle curiosity, and in order to charge the creditors for writing these letters. I did

* I understand it increases daily; and Jones, whom they have drawn in to lodge a detainer against me, says he does not like it; but he supposes he must go on with it to please Martyr.

not like paying postage, and requested they would fend no more.

On my introduction to Mr. Drage, he looked very grave at the magnitude of the sum ; but ordered a fire to be made in a small parlour, which I was to have, and a chamber over it. People of all descriptions came flocking in ; the old man's hand went often into his pocket. I thought he had a very numerous acquaintance ; but when some of the people came in from the inn where Martyr had been, and represented me as a swindler, that I should most likely be hanged, &c. the old man began to change his behaviour, which (although he has a face of brass, and a heart of adamant, with a hand ever open to the touch of metallic substances), had been, in his way, tolerably civil. The marquis of Salisbury, passing through Huntingdon that day (March 30), was told at the inn, that there was a most extraordinary creature just taken ; that I was to be seen, by applying to Mr. Drage. The marquis came with his regiment of officers : this was quite a sufficient licence and precedent to all travellers afterwards ; and it would have been an impeachment of any one's love of natural curiosities,

not

not to go to see this miraculous creature, if they came within a stage of Huntingdon.

The people in the town behaved most unfeelingly and with a brutal ferocity, that is not easily to be described. My dear amiable friend was insulted in going to her lodgings, and actually called after as one of the swindlers. In the evening, Drage altered his plan of letting me have the two rooms, which I offered to pay for weekly (in advance) at his own price; under pretence that it was not agreeable to the sheriff; that the sum was large, &c. His daughter, who is a little dirty flattern, both in house and person, violently objected to my being in the house; and desired her father to let me go among the felons*.

* A mandamus was issued to convene the smiths, and examine the locks; and a very large new padlock was added to the door, at the bottom of the stairs. I am sure the Regent, or Pigot, diamonds, never were secured with more care; and guardian Drage liked the interest he received on this jewel, though he dared not touch the principal. I believe he supposed I had my suit and boots ready, and should slip out, or get over a wall of forty feet high. Old Guardy watched me with a jealous eye: if I had escaped, he would have lost his exhibition-money.

I was

turn to our description. Over the female felon's apartment is a new room, lately built, intended for the sick; and, if it was four feet higher, it might be wholesome for such a purpose. *As it is*, there is not space to breathe; and, in case of fever, it is most dangerously situated for contagion, being in the very centre of the place.

The little yards ought to be, at least, four times as large.—The next was my residence, and a terrible place it was (in my opinion)! The two rooms were very spacious, lofty, and clean, being recently painted and white-washed; but very mean and cold.

The prospect was rather extensive, rural, and pretty. Huntingdon is a farming county: in ancient times, great part of it was forest, and peculiarly adapted to the chase; hence its name. The meadows are remarkably variegated, and the trees grow as if planted by the hand of taste. The Ouse meanders through the meadows, and intersects the county town from the large village of Godmanchester. Huntingdon was the birth-place of the usurper Cromwell. A mile from it, the earl of
Sandwich

Sandwich has a seat, now called Hinchinbrooke-House, formerly a priory: it was built in 1074; is remarkable for the beauty of its situation and its antiquity. We took a walk to it while at Huntingdon, but had not an opportunity of seeing the apartments. The outbuildings are wretchedly mean; you will seldom find them *more so* in the most common house-of-call on the road: and some part of the house appears to be out of repair. This seat gives the title of viscount to the eldest son of the earl*.

Huntingdon is but a small town, has a market on Saturdays: there are three tolerable inns. It had formerly fifteen churches, but has now only two; and they are not much frequented. It sends two members; is sixty miles from London on the high road to Scotland.

I endeavoured to get our apartment made as clean as possible; it had little else to recommend it: yet it

* The earl, with great humanity and politeness, waited on me twice, and took the trouble of regulating several things with the jailor, and went to the post-office to give orders about my letters.

was impossible to keep *it* *so*, on account of the multitudes that thronged it. We have had a crowd come and stand round us, while we were eating our dinner.

The natives of Huntingdon are very narrow in their ideas, and have a provincial manner and idiom, as particular as if more remote. Some ladies in the place shewed us some kindness, and supplied us with many very acceptable things; but they were not natives of the place*.

My dear Miss Sharpe was not suffered to stay with me at night; yet the other prisoners had any of *their* friends stay as long as they pleased: and the old fellow behaved most insolently to her in many instances. Strangers have asked him, in my hearing, whether I was a felon or debtor? He never gave a direct answer, but usually replied, there was "a wheel within a wheel;" and, I have been actually told, that he dared in common to talk of me as *The Swindler*. I paid him for a bed; and, as if willing to add every insult to his inhumanity, he sent

* A beautiful robin used to fly into my room, and sing most enchantingly; it continued to do so till I left.

a parcel of rags, that would frighten any person used to common decency. I rectified this by an application to the magistrates; and I believe the justices were never so often in prison, *as they were at my suit*. I was a means of procuring some conveniences, that those who unfortunately succeed me may be glad of.

It is remarkable that the high-sheriff serves for two counties, and is generally some person of Cambridge. The under-sheriff resided there likewise. Some travellers, of consequence, expressed great disapprobation of this.

In the course of a few weeks, the people of Huntingdon began to perceive we were *not licentious* characters; and some suspected that we might be unjustly accused in other respects. Some sent us wine; others provided us with fruit and vegetables, in great abundance, and of the best quality, from their gardens. Some ladies, at our request, gave us some needle-work, which afforded us some amusement and profit, as they paid us well for it.

After I detected Sharpe about the property he had fold, he wrote to acknowledge it, and sent 5*l.* saying, *that* and *the* 10*l.* which he said he had bor-

rowed, was all he received for it; but he never produced any account; and if he *actually* received *no more*, the buyer deserves a prosecution, for he must know they were dishonestly obtained.

I used formerly, when I had leisure, to write poetry and essays for the magazines and miscellanies, &c.; for some of which I had gained credit and advantage. Most of these things had been published under fictitious signatures. I might have renewed this pursuit at this crisis, both for town and country publishers; but the constant din of the keys, and intrusion of strangers, rendered it wholly impracticable. I was constantly writing to the magistrates; but when they were gone, Drage cared no more about it.

Early in June Creasy came to Huntingdon, accompanied by Webster *the great*. He enquired at Miss Sharpe's lodgings, but she refused to see him: he then left a note, saying, "*her friend* from London-street was come." To this Miss Sharpe replied, it was a perversion of language to dare to call himself her friend, after illegally stripping her of all her property. Miss Sharpe referred him to the attorney

torney we had consulted at Huntingdon. Creasy told him a plausible story, and the attorney advised Miss Sharpe to see him: I did not.

The object, he pretended, was to have her as a witness, in his defence against Haycraft. Miss Sharpe refusing to go, he subpoenaed her the next morning, pretending the cause was coming on immediately; though he knew it would not take place for some weeks. It was a great trial to me to part with Miss Sharpe; but the hope of seeing her in a few days, in some measure reconciled me.

There was a very good kind of woman, who had been there some time for a small debt, and who had kept a public-house in credit in a neighbouring village, but who had been artfully tricked out of her property by pretended friends. This good woman paid me great attention; and, when I was ill, she was extremely assiduous. This circumstance made Miss Sharpe leave me with more composure, though she was herself at the time very unwell, and almost reduced to a shadow.

I was greatly disappointed to hear, by a letter, that Miss Sharpe's stay was protracted; that the

cause was deferred. Thus for five weeks did these artful hypocrites (Searle and Creasy), play with our feelings, and trifle with our health.

During the absence of Miss Sharpe, the friends who had been kind to us at Huntingdon redoubled their assiduities, and took care to have me daily supplied with every thing that could assuage the complicated difficulties and trials of my situation. I hope the impression of their kindness will ever be written in indelible characters on my memory! Books, and every thing likely to amuse, were steadily sent to me; and such as I was previously consulted to choose.

My dear friend, on her return, found me very unwell; and she did not seem the harbinger of better health. Creasy had kept her secluded from any employment that might prove to her advantage, a close prisoner at the house of Searle, his attorney. He had promised to give her the duplicates of the property he said *he had pledged*; to restore to her our papers, and to settle for what he had received at the sale; but Miss Sharpe, after being taken to Guildhall, under the pretence of giving her evidence,

dence, which Creasy said would be of *so much use to me and clear my character*, was told she might return to Huntingdon, her evidence was not wanted. Two guineas were given her to bear her expences. Searle hurried her out of town, on pretence that he knew there were three writs against her; but it was to prevent her making any enquiries into the conduct of his client and himself.

In July a friend of the colonel's waited on me at Huntingdon with a letter from the colonel, desiring him to enquire after me, which I found he had done; and all that he could discover was, that I had been the dupe of my misplaced confidence in artful designing villains. The colonel had then recently come into possession of distinction and property by the death of a relative.

He at that time wished the creditors to make me a bankrupt and share the property left at the Heath; and I believe would have sued Oakley, would I have consented to his claiming my hereditary property; but which I knew must be at the dear expence of a criminal prosecution against———; to this I would by no means consent, and said I would never enrich myself at the expence of those who could not at that
time

time procure those aids our laws provide, for *those who have money*; nor while I exist will I ever consent to unite in a close and most solemn engagement for life, with a person who could be led to suspect my virtue or integrity towards him; happiness is not allied to suspicion. The man who has once suspected, can never wholly esteem the object of his jealousy.

My spirit might be mortified, but is now unsubdued; nor would I engage myself to the most amiable, respected, or exalted man in the universe, while there was the least probable imputation on my character.

I have always been able to provide for myself, and in myself possess independence. The colonel is inexcusable for giving way to malicious misrepresentation from an unknown hand, which was afraid to subscribe its signature: he has broken through every injunction of a most excellent mother; he was guilty of great injustice in suspecting my esteem and fidelity, without minutely investigating the cause of those suspicions. *He had seen Creasy at his counter cutting his leather*, the smell of which was sufficient to keep me *at a very safe distance*; he saw he had no attractions of person, conversation, or accomplishments.

ments. While on the contrary he knew he had received from company and education, every thing that constitutes the man of fashion and literature. Had he applied to Miss Sharpe for the reason of my suffering Creasy to go with us to Margate, he might have been satisfied. Had he appealed to Benson at whose house we were, to his or my servants, he would have discovered there was nothing improper in my conduct towards him. He knew of his acceptances, and why they were given. He was in possession of several of Creasy's letters, intreating my interest for a place. He might have asked Creasy's wife if it was not with her consent those bills were given, as she was previously consulted; and he might have heard from her, that she had wished Mr. Creasy had an opportunity of going to the sea, as he had been much indisposed, and that it was to gratify her wishes that Miss Sharpe and I suffered him to accompany us. Nor could I have supposed any person could be so wicked as to fabricate such malicious accusations on the strength of it—or that the colonel could be so weak as to suppose I put him off in consequence of any such intrigue.

My carpenter's conduct has been very infamous
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in daring to go about damning me for Creasy's whore; it was quite sufficient for him (that after exceeding my orders, and making an exaggerated charge) he was suing me, and keeping me in confinement for a debt of which I had no account (except an observation from the surveyor that it was very unjust); he had no business to traduce my character; nor will he like to serve an apprenticeship in Newgate for so doing.

“ The communication of a libel to any *one* person is a publication in the eye of the law.”

4 *Blackstone*, c. 11.

“ A scandal expressed in an ironical manner is as properly a libel, as that which is expressed in direct terms.”

1 *Hawkins*, 194.

I imagine my libellers are ignorant of this, or they think there is no law for those who like me are stripped by the hand of fraud, rapine, and injustice.

Soon after Miss Sharpe's return to Huntingdon, I published *Who are the Swindlers?* containing an account of the conduct, of Oakley, Creasy, Searle, Sharpe, and Hardy. I was deprived of all means of seeking redress in a court of justice by their illegal conduct in stripping me of every thing; and neither law, justice, or equity is to be procured without money.

money in England. I had this pamphlet printed at St. Ives; the first edition sold very fast, and was instrumental of procuring us many comforts. It sadly galled the publishers of the newspapers, &c. who had printed so many libels* and lies concerning me; and you may be sure it did not please the parties whose conduct was laid before the public by it. They threatened the bookfellers, but they well knew it would not suit their purpose to contest these facts in a court of justice; so after a little swaggering and boasting they swallowed the affront, having before shared the property.

At the time that I published this we were less interrupted by strangers. The Lord Chief Baron had seen some of my letters that I had written to the magistrates; his lordship animadverted on the enormity of the goaler's conduct, and expressed his disapprobation of the towns-people in thus insulting

* The worst libel is in a work called Chronological Tablets, price 3s. which is a book to be handed down to posterity, and intended to be put into the hands of young persons. This work records me as the notorious female swindler of 1801. The publishers are Vernor and Hood, Ridgway, Crosby, Hurst, and Badcock, all of whom have sold it, and owned the sale of some thousands.

an innocent person against whom no crime was proved, and who was only under arrest for debt. The townspeople were highly offended at his lordship's interference. The grand jury were directed to wait upon me, but I cannot say they behaved like gentlemen*, nor do I believe they made a just report to the judge. They were all people in the goaler's interest, because he has some small freeholds, and is entitled to a paltry vote, which experience has taught is sufficient to set aside justice in many respects. But I trust in a little time, I shall at least be able to call upon the county or the goaler; *they sanction* to pay my *ar-rears of interruption* from every source of profitable employment, if I forgive the insults and indignities to which I was exposed.

A person is not to be divested of means to supply their wants by a mercenary inhuman wretch in whose custody they may be. Such things are not suffered in London; prisoners are encouraged to industry, and may, without the unseasonable interruptions or intrusions of the keepers, follow any profession, or have what intercourse they please, either among their fellow prisoners or others who come in to them.

* Mr. Allnutt was the principal speaker on this occasion; see, *Who are the Swindlers?* p. 32.

Drage,

Drage, while he brought throngs to insult me, by which he received a gratuity, refused even my landress admittance, and damning me, would tell her I should wash for myself.

He would likewise refuse my servant to go in or out; because, if I sent the turnkey of errands, he was sure to make the market penny.

Drage's daughter, Polly, cried sadly, when she heard that the books *sold so fast* at Mr. Row's (who sold them for my sole benefit). She told my mantua maker, she thought it was very hard, I should buy new dresses, and get money by books about her. She observed it would have spoilt her character, *if every body* had not known her.

It was surprising to see how Polly brushed up and improved; and she certainly was much neater *about the feet* in particular, after we had been there some time. Polly did us the justice of bearing testimony to the influence of good example; and it was observed to me by a person who knew her, that our being *there* was as good as a year's schooling to Miss Polly, the only daughter of Guardy Brass.

I had several applications for the copy-right of *Who are the Swindlers?* And at last agreed to sell
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the second edition for 50 guineas, and I believe, I had at last, about 400 copies * of the work besides ; but I had a great deal of trouble to get part of the cash, and was obliged to employ an attorney.

I sent copies of the first edition to a creditor, (with whom I intended to lay out some of the profits) to enter it for me at Stationer's Hall, but he kept them. The consequence was, that the work was pirated, and I had no redress. And the whole profits have not exceeded 120 l.

I had a promise from the publisher of the Traveller, that if I would write letters for that paper, I should receive 10s. 6d. for each ; he paid me for one, but having sent several others, (all of which were inserted) no money being sent for them, I discontinued it.

Towards the end of Autumn I began to think of going to London ; the prospect of winter was very unpleasant, as Miss Sharpe was obliged to leave me

* I have been less successful with my subsequent publication, not being able to get any money or account from the publisher, who engaged it at an inferior price, in order to pay me ready money.

at dusk, and [the evenings were very long. The doors being locked before dark, *while I was there*; they have been open, and persons admitted till 10 o'clock at other times; but this was a piece of old Brads's spite, to separate Miss Sharpe and I, because he saw we were so attached. Besides, in cold weather, Miss Sharpe would have found going out of nights very prejudicial to her health. Huntingdon is subject to fogs, on account of its vicinity to the meres and fens.

I directed an attorney to remove me. Miss Sharpe went to London by the coach. I wrote to a person in the Fleet to procure me the best furnished apartment he could, and one, if possible, for my servant; to lay in coals to air it, &c. which was done several days before old Guardy chose to start. Nor would he let me know till late the night before he set off, fearing a rescue on the road. I paid four guineas for a post chaise, and was surprised to find Old Brads had let a seat in it to some person going to town. I sent my baggage a week before, by the waggon, and had only myself and my little companion, Miss Patty Frisk, to take care of. I left my

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servant

servant to go to see her friends, and she was to follow in a few days. As she was very desirous of continuing with me, I had applied to the society for her release; and she obtained her liberty in consequence.

Miss Patty is a very entertaining little kitten, that I had nursed up with some difficulty; she seemed sensible of my kindness, and had ten thousand diverting tricks to amuse me, except when I have been ill, when nothing would induce Patty to leave my bed, where she would sit and watch, and look pitifully.

Gratitude is due for the affection of a little domestic animal, and Patty was not to be left behind. She is perfectly satisfied in sharing her mistress's solitude and provisions, and has not a wish to be elsewhere.

We had a delightful day, November 6, and arrived in Chancery-lane by four o'clock. I found an apartment in the Fleet taken, and aired, and every thing comfortable provided. My dear Miss Sharpe came to me in the evening. I must say this place is well constructed for the convenience of the prison-

prisoners * : it is very large. The rooms are a good size ; and if people are cleanly, may be made both decent and comfortable. It has a very good chapel, but very badly attended. Those who have the management of it, are respectful, civil, and obliging ; nor do they attempt to interfere with the privileges of the prisoners, some of whom have very good and lucrative employments, and, I believe, perfectly satisfied with their situation.

It is very inconvenient for a modest woman ; such cannot walk the parade (that is for the men) ; and they have no separate walk. It is, therefore, very injurious to the health, to be wholly confined to one room ; and I have severely felt the effects, having been seriously ill.

Many of the men, who have no employment, smoke and drink beer all day : the air is actually impregnated with the fumes. It is a sad thing that any person, with property, will shut themselves up in such a place. It is equally disgraceful that any per-

Many persons who have been into it, have been surprized at the magnitude and good appearance of the place, as well as with the neatness of our apartment.

son, who is willing to give up *all*, and exert themselves for the benefit of their creditors, should be immured by their malice, and prevented from being useful in the world, by the mercenary wretch who has first forced the very property upon you, charged you *treble the value*, and now sues you for it; at the same time preventing and counteracting every reasonable mode of liquidation. Our laws, in this respect, want emendation; and have been questioned as to the justice of them, by many able commentators on men, manners, and the policy of countries.

It is astonishing to see how little sympathy persons, confined in this place, manifest for each other. Not being able to procure another room for my servant, and not liking her to sleep in my room, or to do her business in the general kitchen, I was obliged to decline her coming. I engaged a prisoner's wife to wait upon me, at seven shillings a week. She complained of being wretchedly poor, and begged of me, on the first day that I engaged her, to advance her money to buy a joint for her family; saying, it was three weeks since she had one. About a fortnight after, I entrusted her to buy a few tin utensils, which came to about 28s.: she laid upon this (as I
soon

soon after discovered by an interview with the feller), an advance of 3s. 9d. When I expostulated with her on her dishonesty, her husband alledged it was for her *agency*; a very usual thing, he said, in this place. Yet she was at that time *my servant*, at weekly wages. We differed and parted about this agency-business; and she actually charged me a shilling a week for boiling the tea-kettle, exclusive of her weekly wages, or her agency-tax; which, I have since discovered, she laid, both in price, weight, measure, and quality, on every article I entrusted her to fetch.

As soon as convenient, after my arrival in town, I convened a meeting of my London creditors, in this place. Three of them waited upon me, with my attorney, to request I would call a general-meeting: they seemed desirous to do something for themselves and me.

Agreeable to their advice, I published an advertisement in the Gazette, and purchased the Gazette to lay before them. I appointed the 6th of January; and that they might be well accommodated, I paid a guinea for a room, at the London Coffee-house; fearing any difficulty might be started about obtaining

ing the house out of Creasy's hands, who has kept possession since the sale, I employed a counsel to answer any questions, or solve any doubts of theirs, as well as to plead on the improbability of my doing any thing to serve them, under circumstances of confinement.

The proposals from me to the creditors were, that they should, by legal measures, recover and sell the interest I had in the house *; and, if they pleased, to make an immediate dividend. That

* My tradesmen appear to understand the rule of multiplication for their own emolument! A few days previous to Creasy's artful persuasion to leave the house, I asked the surveyor what was the amount of the money expended on the premises; he replied, 2000*l*. On the ninth of this month, Feb. 7, 1802, he told Miss Sharpe the bills were 4000*l*. He produced his book in which was a memorandum of a bill, for papering the attics, done by a person of the name of Gordon, who delivered his bill, examined by this surveyor, for 16*l*. 17*s*.: it is now set down in his estimate at 150*l*.! He told me the carpenter's bill was unjust, at least *one-third*. To please him, he has since sworn, that the whole is just. The painter's bill, when I was at Huntingdon, was 450*l*.; he now swears it is 567*l*. 15*s*. 11*d*.—The rest increase in proportion, notwithstanding the charitable contribution of the whole map of creditors! who agree to pay the costs of keeping me confined; and, by that means, relieve me of the addition of a most enormous lawyer's bill.

they

they might, under a deed of trust, sue Oakley and Creasy, and appropriate what was recovered to their use; or, that they should give me a letter of licence, for five years, to let me sue the parties *for their benefit*; and that *if any deficiency should be proved* when the debts were examined, I would exert myself to make good that deficiency, on condition that they immediately released me, in order that I might be able to make the requisite exertions.

Martyr, the attorney, attended this meeting; and, with his father's assistance, amused the creditors, by telling them that my counsel had not received any communications from me: that he was *waiting* to hear; that it would be of no use to go into the room appointed, &c.

Some of the creditors have since informed me, that they waited from three till seven o'clock; and then went away with the impression that I had convened them to make fools of them; except that the expence I must have been at, in providing the room, counsel, &c. proved the contrary.

What could be the reason of this absurd conduct I am at a loss to know. The counsel and attorney
went

went from me to the coffee-house; my attorney knew a room was engaged, and it was his duty to collect my creditors (at least those who were so disposed) into it. And if my carpenter, fearing a prosecution from me, is determined, as long *as he can*, to deprive me of the power of acting; yet the other creditors manifest a most pusillanimous spirit in being led by this blustering hero, merely because he can terrify the timid by the obscenity of a mouth full of horrid imprecations, inasmuch, that he appears to be created the devil's vicegerent of profanation.

Creasy had the insolence to intrude himself into my presence, to tell me the trustees he nominated, refused to act, and that he could not sell the house. The reader may be sure he did not meet a very welcome reception. A few days after his attorney called, to know *what gratuity I would take*, to nominate other trustees, that Creasy might sell the house. Would I take 500*l.*?

On sending notices to the trustees not to act, I found they had been appointed without their knowledge, and that they did not mean to act. Thus Creasy is prevented in his wicked design of selling
the

the house, and keeping all the money; which, I have no doubt, he would have done, if he could have accomplished it.

Searle, who had the agreement in his hands (as my attorney), refuses to deliver it up, alledging he has costs. I only know that he applied, by letter, &c. for two debts due to me, which he received, but has not accounted for. He surely does not mean to charge me with defending Haycraft's suit, or for the deed he so wickedly obtained for Creasy?

I have, in every respect, done all I could for the creditors, and have been willing to act with them against Oakley or Creasy; both of whom they might have brought to a reckoning, and reaped the advantage, at a much less expence than Everest and Martyr have caused them.

It required no great knowledge to ascertain that they could do nothing for the recovery of the property, and the advantage of the general creditors, without my concurrence and assistance; therefore, they should have co-operated with me in proceeding against them: instead of which, though Martyr has made a long job for his son, all the creditors at large

have to contribute to the payment of their enormous bill, and to add their respective shares to the money they have already lost.

It is now incumbent on me to exert myself to procure the means to bring all these parties to answer for their conduct; for I still think, if money can be procured, some law, and perhaps some justice, may be obtained: and should I be spared to write the second part of a life so chequered, I hope a ray of sun-shine will enliven it. If not, I trust I shall be endued with resignation to the will of Him who does *nothing in vain*; and who will finally *display* every thing that may now be *enveloped*.

F I N I S.

Burton, Printer, 82, Fetter-lane.



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